

WEYCO, INC. Walkers take 10,000 Steps to Improve their Health

Initiative in Brief

Employees who join the *WEYCO Walkers 10,000 Steps* program make themselves eligible for prizes for "most improved walker" and "most amount of steps per day." With encouragement and role modeling from their CEO, Howard Weyers, WEYCO, INC. employees enrolled in the program are also offered the opportunity to receive a free body composition analysis and fill out a physical activity readiness questionnaire. The first time the program was offered, 45 participants signed up and completed the program.

Employees purchase their own pedometers for the 8 week program designed to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity to health, increase physical activity among employees, and make the connection between individual health and business sustainability. WEYCO offers prizes in the form of Chair Massages and Reflexology Coupons to incent employees to achieve 10,000 and create a competition between employees.

Employees are allowed two 15- minute walk breaks on site with permission from management. There is a walking trail across the street from their main facility and a 3 lap- 1 mile course is measured off around the buildings. Employees turn in their self reported steps weekly to the lifestyle coordinator who then posts the results on a board in the cafeteria for folks to monitor the progress and create a bit more competitive environment and incentive to walk

Contact Info: Pam Harb,
Lifestyle Challenge Coord. WEYCO, INC.
517/349-7010 ext.1632
pamh@weyco.com

Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- Workers report having more energy and a better mental attitude among walkers
- No injuries from the low impact program
- Workers report being better able to handle stress

"By making employees responsible for their own health, and by establishing support programs for them, we have both lowered and stabilized our health care costs.
...Our health care costs have remained level for 27 months in a row".

Howard Weyers,
Harvard Business Review
May 2005

Challenges

- Production log quotas make it hard for employees to pull away from their desks.
- Employees expect immediate weight loss results and are disappointed.

Lessons Learned

- Competition between units or departments increases participation.
- Offering small incentives like t-shirts or massages increases participation.
- Make participation as easy as possible so that participants need only show up.

Cost: \$1500 body comp machine & \$100 for incentives

Risk Factor Addressed: Physical Inactivity

Impact/Reach: 45 employees

Business/Sector: Health Insurance/Service Sector